

AL. 3, 1985-469

#1

Alberta

SOCIAL SERVICES
AND COMMUNITY HEALTH

HEPATITIS A (Infectious Hepatitis)

CANADIAN
C2
MAR 15 1979

Infectious hepatitis is a common infectious disease caused by a virus.

SYMPTOMS

Nausea, vomiting, fever, loss of appetite and pain in the abdomen are typical early symptoms of infectious hepatitis. A frequent symptom is weakness and fatigue. The patient sometimes feels depressed. Jaundice (a yellow color of the skin and eyes) is often present.

All or any of these symptoms may also be caused by other conditions. A physician may require laboratory tests to determine whether the patient does have infectious hepatitis.

First symptoms of the disease appear 15 - 20 days after the person is infected.

TRANSMISSION

Infectious hepatitis is spread through the body discharges, usually the feces, of a person who has the disease.

It may also be transmitted through water, milk or food which has been contaminated by material containing the virus.

Some people may have a very mild form of infectious hepatitis which is not recognized. However, they can still be carriers spreading the disease to others.

NOTIFICATION

The city health department or health unit should be notified immediately when someone has infectious hepatitis.

ISOLATION PROCEDURES

Isolation procedures shall be applied for fourteen days from onset of illness and seven days after onset of jaundice, whichever is the longer.

A separate room should be provided for all patients suffering from the disease who are under the age of one year.

Don

596 6868

The virus is very difficult to destroy. All soiled dressings and tissues shall be placed and sealed in impervious bags in the isolation room and shall be burned without opening. Urine, stools and vomitus should be flushed down the toilet into a public sewage disposal system where available and otherwise should be disinfected before disposal following instructions of the local health authority.

Food utensils should be boiled for at least 10 minutes.

Anyone caring for the patient should carefully wash his hands immediately after touching the patient or contaminated articles.

QUARANTINE

None.

SPECIAL MEASURES

An infected person may not work in any occupations involving the handling of food or milk for twenty eight days from the onset of illness.

Family contacts should be excluded from occupations involving the handling of food or milk and are usually given a prophylactic dose of immune serum globulin (see below).

IMMUNIZATION

There is no long-term immunization available. However, families or other close contacts of patients should consult their physician or local health authority. In some cases a dose of immune serum globulin may give temporary protection against the disease.

TREATMENT

Bed rest and a special diet is the treatment usually recommended. The patient should follow his doctor's instructions for best chances of a quick recovery.

000169